



# ***STATE DEVELOPMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND WORKS COMMITTEE***

Mr JJ McDonald MP—Chair  
Ms JM Bush MP  
Mr TA James MP  
Mr D Kempton MP  
Mr SR King MP  
Mr BJ Mellish MP

**Staff present:**

Ms S Galbraith—Committee Secretary  
Ms R Duncan—Assistant Committee Secretary

## **PUBLIC HEARING—INQUIRY INTO E-MOBILITY SAFETY AND USE IN QUEENSLAND**

### **TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS**

**Monday, 25 August 2025**

**Brisbane**

## MONDAY, 25 AUGUST 2025

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**The committee met at 10.51 am.**

**CHAIR:** Good morning. I declare open this public hearing of the inquiry into e-mobility safety and use in Queensland. As this is a separate part of the inquiry, and a public hearing, we have to go through the announcements again. With me here today are: Ms Jonty Bush, member for Cooper and deputy chair; Mr Terry James, member for Mulgrave; Mr David Kempton, member for Cook; Mr Shane King, member for Kurwongbah; and Mr Bart Mellish, member for Aspley. The purpose of the hearing today is to assist the committee with its examination of e-mobility safety and use in Queensland.

This hearing is a proceeding of the Queensland parliament and is subject to the parliament's standing rules and orders. The committee and invited witnesses may participate in the proceedings. Witnesses are not required to give evidence under oath or affirmation but I remind witnesses that intentionally misleading the committee is a serious offence. I also remind members of the public that they may be excluded from the hearing at the direction of the committee. These proceedings are being recorded and broadcast live on the parliament's website. Media may be present and are subject to the committee's media rules and the chair's direction at all times. You may be filmed or photographed during the proceedings and images may also appear on the parliament's website or social media pages. Please turn your mobiles off or put them on silent mode. Finally, please remember to press your microphone on before you start speaking and off when you are finished. When it is red it is dangerous.

### **BOURKE, Mr Peter, General Manager, Bicycle Industries Australia**

**CHAIR:** Good morning. Would you like to make an opening statement after which the committee will have questions for you?

**Mr Bourke:** Thank you very much. Thank you for the introduction. Bicycle Industries Australia is the national body for the bicycle industry. We represent manufacturers, importers, distributors and retailers. I mention manufacturers because we do have one in Australia. The rest of the bikes are imported, so it is a very small market. I would like to start by saying e-bikes are great. Legally compliant e-bikes are fantastic. They have a significant role to play in the transport task. They have benefits for health, benefits for the environment, benefits for congestion reduction, social connections, independence and, most importantly, they actually have a significant positive economic benefit to the Australian economy. We are talking about a lot of issues, but we need to reiterate that they are a fantastic transport tool.

I would also like to reiterate what the police said. E-bikes are great. Anything over 250 watts continuous rated or anything that has an assisted speed over 25 kays an hour or a throttle over six kays an hour is not an e-bike; it is an unroadworthy motorbike masquerading often as an e-bike. A lot of the issues that we talk about and the media talks about are not actually e-bikes. The language we use is also very important.

Earlier it was mentioned that there was a letter from the Department of Transport. I am moving my intro around a little to touch on these points. One thing I need to add on this is that that letter, which we supported as an industry—we supported and provided the contact details for the retail sector throughout Queensland and Australia to Transport and Main Roads—also highlighted that a high-power bike, high-power motor that is restricted by software or otherwise is never road legal. To clear up something here: anything that is high power and restricted is never road legal. The thing we talked about, and I am sure it will come up, is switching between off-road and on-road. That can never be road legal. That is just a clarification.

The last thing I would like to highlight from the industry is the one thing we desperately want is harmonisation. In 2012 we introduced EN15194 to the federal definition of e-bike. It took five years for every state and territory to adopt that into their regulations. Bits and pieces happened along the way but in 2021 the federal government, in its wisdom, removed that requirement from the Australian Design Rules under the Road Vehicle Standards Act and since then we now have many different definitions of an e-bike. Queensland has a different definition to New South Wales, which has a different definition to Victoria, which has a different definition to the federal government. We have lost

the vertical and also the horizontal harmonisation across the states and from international down to national and down to the states. We are also, because of the issues we are talking about, which is road use and electrical, finding variations within states between electrical regulators and the departments of transport. That is not the case in Queensland. We do not want it to be the case in Queensland. This is one of the biggest challenges from an industry point of view that we are finding across Australia.

The last thing I would add is we are a very small market in the world. We make up about 0.5 per cent of the world's market of e-bikes and then obviously within that the states are smaller. We do not really make anything in Australia so once we start to look outside and create new or unique definitions or processes we are actually significantly harming the industry and significantly harming the consumer and we would like to see none of that. Thank you very much for the opportunity to present today.

**Mr MELLISH:** In your submission you talked about adopting the European standard into the definition of e-bikes in terms of sales. Can you expand on how adopting that definition would contribute to safety and better outcomes?

**Mr Bourke:** The European standard is the most widely utilised standard across the world, through Asia, through Europe. It was previously across Australia. It is a complete bicycle standard. It has been worked on for a number of years. The most recent iteration of that was in 2023. The current version is 2017 modified in 2023. It does have electrical as well as mechanical elements to it. What we would like to see is a clause on antitampering so it actually shifts a lot of the liability from the consumer to the retailer or manufacturer. It effectively says the manufacturer or the retailer must do whatever is practicable to prevent the bike from being modified. The current situation where a brand may offer a code, wink, wink, nudge, nudge as has been described, a throttle in a box, that would then shift the liability to the retailer or the manufacturer. Right now it is on the consumer to make sure they have a safe product. We want it to be that the retailer, the manufacturer must provide a safe product and must not allow unsafe product, or support is probably a better statement. We know human nature says people are going to find ways to modify things, but you should not make it easy out of the box.

**Mr MELLISH:** If I can follow up on that, we have heard before that reversing the 2021 change would fix some of the issues of these overpowered ones coming here, but you are saying as well putting the onus on the retailer for the throttle in a box; is that a complementary or an alternative way? I am trying to work out which is the best way to combat the issue. Is it both or picking one of those two?

**Mr Bourke:** There is no doubt stopping them at the border is the No. 1 outcome that we are looking for. Returning the definition or the requirement to meet the Australian Design Rules would certainly support that. What also happened when they changed the definition in that situation in 2021 was that they also switched from making the requirement for an import advisory notice from mandatory to voluntary. Basically now if you get a decision that you do not like, you could then do what every good business does, well, if I do not make any more applications they cannot tell me no. You can bring a product in without that advisory notice. That is a long-winded way of answering your question: yes, to import controls being to Australian Design Rules definitions; yes to controls under the Australian Road regulations under the NTC; yes to switching to a mandatory notification for an advisory notice rather than a voluntary one; and then yes, obviously within the road regulations, to ensure that we have the antitampering clause. As well as, I must add, there are also other standards within those requirements: battery safety, quality of frame and quality of the braking system. We want to make sure we provide a quality product.

**Mr KEMPTON:** There is no doubt at all about the economic and social benefit of bikes, and I would not be this trim, taunt and terrific if I did not have one. The RACQ had no issue with e-bikes, as they stand in the current definition, and said that we really do not need to address it. I agree we cannot shift that. I think they are either e-bikes as you have defined them or not. But the other issue is around the use of e-bikes, especially in crowded public places, but that involves any bicycle. Is that a matter of regulation or communication and education?

**Mr Bourke:** The first thing I would say is we need to ensure we provide them with a good quality product that cannot be modified, that is an e-bike. We also want to make sure that we are not truncating the issue between an e-bike and an off-road motorbike masquerading. That is both providing the product and then there is community education. There is no if, but or maybes. We have moved away from educating our community on how the product should be used. So, from my perspective, it is very clear: provide them with a good quality product through regulation and then communicate and educate how that product is used and where it is used, when, why and all those sort of scenarios.

**Mr KING:** You piqued my curiosity. Who is the Australian manufacturer? I might have missed it.

**Mr Bourke:** There is a brand called Stealth whose average bike has about 5,000 watts, but as a direct result of them being an Australian manufacturer, all bikes coming into Australia are subject to a five per cent import tariff, unless they are coming out of China, because of the free trade agreement. Sorry, I had to chuck that in.

**Mr KING:** I was thinking Malvern Star. I do not know. We heard before about the battery management systems—the introduction of battery standards and guidelines. If we were to get something like that, that would have to increase the safety of e-bikes. I know a lot of people do fear—you talk about scooters as well—‘Oh, those things just catch on fire,’ but they seem to be very popular. I have an EV myself. The battery management and standards would have to help the uptake, would it not?

**Mr Bourke:** Absolutely. We want battery safety. We have mentioned EN15194. There is a very strict battery requirement called EN50604 which is a standard specifically about the battery. As my previous speaker presented, it has a very strict battery management system, which does exactly what he was talking about. If there is charge coming in, or the incorrect charge or overcharge or wrong battery source, it ceases taking charge.

Would it promote better use? There are two answers to that question: one, the consumer perception, and, two, the bureaucracy supported it. It is not just bureaucratic. We are working with a lot of strata title associations who are very concerned and are banning these products from their facilities. I believe 19 per cent of Australians live under a strata title. Therefore, if strata ban e-mobility devices, that is a huge chunk of the market that cannot access them.

We are working with the WA government on guidelines for government buildings to allow e-bikes and e-scooters to still be parked on their sites. It is consumer confidence, but also, for those who are in charge of regulating the program—insurers, strata or government—it is to give them the confidence to also allow them on the facility. It is probably to keep support of them and then grow support as well.

**Mr KING:** I understand that if you are a principal of a school and kids are riding them to school, you do not want them stored under a particular building, but you also do not want them out in the sun. It is a very valid point. I appreciate that.

**Mr JAMES:** These things are becoming more sophisticated and they will probably get better with technology in years to come. We are hearing that they keep cars off the road and they are good for people. Would your industry be willing to pay a rego or subscription fee to pay for better infrastructure?

**Mr Bourke:** Registration is a really interesting question. From our perspective, we actually want more people using these products; we do not really want to put more barriers in the way of getting more people out there. In approaching registration, we have to be very careful that we do not have unintended consequences, whether that be to children riding to school, to the tourism sector or to the disability sector. There are several elements to this. In regards to paying rego to actually support infrastructure, if there was confidence that any rego fee would go directly to infrastructure, then that would be a different approach as well. Obviously, from our perspective, we want better infrastructure for all mobility users, whether that is scooters or bike riders. At this point in time, I do not believe that registration would be a solution for infrastructure or other problems that this would present.

**Mr JAMES:** As a follow-up question, we heard from the police in the first session. They indicated that it is difficult to determine whether they are illegal machines or mobility devices or they are legal, and they are saying some sort of identification would assist. The only identification really is some sort of registration that someone has to administer, which means there is a cost.

**Mr Bourke:** As an industry, we would 100 per cent support—and we have had discussions with other states—for a marking system for a product that is for private use only. If a bike, as I mentioned earlier, has the capacity—and this is according to Transport and Main Roads, in the letter that we discussed earlier that is sent to every shop—to be greater than 250 watts, and on that point, New South Wales is 500 watts, so if they sell it as 500 watts in New South Wales, it can never be road legal in Queensland. If a bike has a capacity to be greater than 500 watts, we would heavily support a marking system, not necessarily rego, but a marking system that says ‘for private use only’.

In discussions with various agencies, we believe this would be supported and it would clearly identify that if a bike is sold, or could be used, for private use only, it must be marked and identified

by the police. It does not identify the rider, it does not identify the product, but it identifies that it can only be used on private land. If it is not on private land, it is clearly in contradiction of the regulations.

**CHAIR:** Are you aware of a marking system like that? Sorry, I am following up on the question and the issue you raised about marking. I could see a device running down the road with a big red, maroon or whatever colour marker on it that is easily identifiable which basically says, 'Stop, you do not ride this publicly.' Are you aware of any marking system that is used around the world?

**Mr Bourke:** There are scenarios where they have a marking system that is specifically for speed pedelec which is a 45 kilometres an hour version. In Europe, there is a 25 and a 45. They have a very clear delineation and marking system for those. So, there is a model that can be used. On that point, from our perspective, the one thing we do not want to see is Australia try to reinvent the wheel. Again, we are a small market. Europe is the biggest market. America is a big market, but Europe is the biggest market which is where all our product is sold and comes to Australia, or the vast majority, so we certainly look to that a lot.

**CHAIR:** What does that marking system look like? How do you identify the 45 kilometre one versus the 25?

**Mr Bourke:** Over there, they are considered the same as a moped so they are given a registration plate.

**Ms BUSH:** Peter, in your submission on page 14, you talk about the Equitable Commute Project. Can you expand on that, for the committee—the benefits, particularly for the outlying suburbs in some areas? We were up in the Caboolture area and they were talking about some equity issues. I am keen to get you to expand on the project.

**Mr Bourke:** In terms of the Equitable Commute Project, what we have found is e-mobility reduces social connection barriers and reduces transport barriers, and that is not just the specific elements of the Equitable Commute Project; that is e-mobility in general. It has the ability to connect people to work, to education and to school. There was an e-bike incentive program in Queensland in 2023, I believe it was, of a \$2 million amount. Using an evaluation tool developed by the Institute for Sensible Transport, using Queensland Treasury figures, they found there was an up to \$7 to \$1 return on investment for every dollar invested to provide safe and compliant product. The Equitable Commute Project provides access to people who find that the purchase or the up-front cost of an e-mobility device is a barrier to them moving forward. It has a higher return on investment because of the ability for people to get to work, get to medical appointments and get to social scenarios, and it actually reduces stress and strain on support services around them. For those in need, it is simply a framework that provides access to a safe and legal device.

One of the big things, as you mentioned with Caboolture and other scenarios, is that departments of transport are very stretched to provide public transport solutions. What we find in a lot of locations is a transport desert where either heavy rail, light rail or a bus cannot get to those locations, so we are now forcing families into a private motor vehicle or a second private motor vehicle. I think it was the NRMA which estimated it costs \$22,000 a year to run a private motor vehicle. For those with limited financials and limited access to public transport, \$44,000 out of one house is a lot of money to be pushing into private motor vehicles. The Equitable Commute Project is a system that provides access to e-mobility devices to provide those links to either public transport or other scenarios for places they need to get to.

**Ms BUSH:** I would imagine connected to that would be the need to invest in proper active transport infrastructure. I think your submission made some comments on that, particularly in the Brisbane context.

**Mr Bourke:** Yes. E-mobility, like all active transport, requires safe, connected, complete networks. It does not matter how good a part of the network is we produce, if we have a barrier, whether it is 500 metres and they are forced to ride on busy roads or there is no access at all, it actually ruins or finishes the entire trip. As the deputy chair has alluded to, we need a complete safe network for all e-mobility users, for all active transport users. Whether it is for someone walking, on an analogue bike, on an electric bike or on a scooter, they actually need a complete route to get them where they need to go in a safe way. When we say 'safe', it is not just physically; it is also about feeling safe. Whether it be lighting, transport or any other issue, we need to ensure the route is safe—the complete route.

**Ms BUSH:** To make a final comment, I always make the observation—this is central to my electorate at the moment—that a lot of our bike paths are recreationally designed. They are around creeks that flood and get washed out, there is no lighting, and so they are pretty unusable. They are

certainly not efficient. Do you think there needs to be some kind of overhaul in how we design our active transport infrastructure, catering particularly to e-bikes that can get some speed up and do some decent distances?

**Mr Bourke:** Not necessarily picking on Queensland, but traditionally across Australia we put infrastructure where we think we can, where it is easiest and where we do not actually create any public outcry or we are not taking any car parks or we are not pushing cars out of the way. We fundamentally need to flip that on its head and we do need to look at direct, efficient routes that get people where they want to go in the most efficient manner. With e-bikes, there is no doubt they can get to speeds of 25 kilometres an hour which is the highest assisted speed they can achieve. We do need to look at the way we design the infrastructure. Under Austroads, there are specific standards and guidelines in terms of building active transport infrastructure. To ensure we meet that is probably the first thing, and then we need to review that to make sure we actually do provide what is accurate. As you alluded to, whether it is better sight lines because they can go faster or just more direct rather than just following the waterway because that was the easiest piece of land we could get our hands on.

**CHAIR:** My question comes back to the harmonisation you talked about both vertical and horizontal. Can you unpack that for us, particularly around the European standard and changing the onus from the consumer to the seller? Can you just talk to us about that?

**Mr Bourke:** There are a number of standards that states or governments can access. We supported Catherine King in 2012 when she first adopted, as the parliamentary secretary for transport, EN15194. It is the largest and most utilised standard across the world. It is also, from our perspective, the leading standard for a complete bicycle. I want to be very clear on that.

One of our challenges is that the electrical regulators are looking at battery safety, not looking at product safety. They are looking at a single item, and that is their purview. The EN standard actually is a complete standard, as I mentioned. It includes brakes, it includes wheels and it includes the strength of the frame, whereas, if we look at an electrical standard, those things can be missing. We are aware that the New South Wales regulations that were introduced can certify a bike as safe that can do 70 or 80 kilometres an hour or it could be held together by duct tape because the battery and the electricals are safe. We prefer that standard for that reason.

In terms of internationally, that would also align with the manufacturing system. Most bikes are manufactured out of Asia and most of them are produced to EN15194, to the European market, because it is the largest market in the world. That is a safe market. They are the two key reasons we are sticking to those two standards. Our road regulations are aligned to that standard as well.

If we were to look at the next biggest market, which would be America, for a standard, it has a different regulation for road laws. It is 32 kilometres an hour and 750 watts, whereas we are 25 kilometres an hour and 250 watts. Therefore, aligning a standard to that is problematic from our perspective.

In terms of the shifting more reliance onto the seller to ensure the product is safe, it is built into the standard. It is not something we need to create. It is not something we need to generate. The anti-tampering clause—which, if you need to know, is 4.2.16 of the standard, if you want to check it out—is very clear. You cannot support the consumer to modify speed, to modify power, to modify the throttle. Otherwise the liability is on you. Like I said, we know consumers are going to do what they can to modify a product, but we do not want to make it easy for them. We cannot assist them to do it. I am sure we have all been young and tried these things before, but we just do not want to help them out.

**CHAIR:** Thank you very much for that clarification. We still have not discovered why EN15194 was put in place and then removed in 2021. Can you give us an informed position of why it was removed?

**Mr Bourke:** Unfortunately we were not consulted throughout this process. We learnt of the process subsequently after as an industry. We are aware that they did some consultation with the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator, but they forgot to talk to the bike industry.

I believe it was to simplify the definition of an e-bike. I also believe there is an issue at a federal level that they do not like to reference a standard, firstly, that they do not control—obviously EN15194 is a standard we do not control—and, secondly, they do not like to reference a standard that is behind a paywall under copyright legislation. The Productivity Commission released a report, I believe, at the start of August highlighting the issues associated with the current structure of standards behind paywalls and copyright. I believe the government identified that it would cost them \$7 million to

overcome this issue. I am not talking about e-bikes; I am talking about all standards. This is a problem across all regulations—that they are reticent to reference a standard that is behind a paywall that the average consumer has to pay \$100 to access.

We are trying to overcome this. With another hat on, I am the chair of the Australian Standards committee. I believe a version went to the committee last week. It was pretty much a direct adoption of the EN standard. It will be AS15194. It went to the committee and it should go to public consultation, if I can get it through the committee, within about two months. That would overcome the first problem—that this is not a standard we control. It would then become the Australian Standard, AS15194, but it would still be behind a paywall. The copyright issue is something I cannot work with. I cannot overcome but, yes, I believe that is a referenced problem.

**CHAIR:** Surely that is a common problem with many different things in terms of the IP of a device. Surely that is a common problem that has been overcome many times.

**Mr Bourke:** It was highlighted by the Productivity Commission that an apprentice builder must spend thousands of dollars to get access to standards that they must have in terms of how to build a house—how to build anything. That is where they have identified a massive problem. Bikes are obviously my concern, but across the board it is a massive problem.

**CHAIR:** I was not going to ask this question of you, but now I understand you have the expertise. If a bike does not meet EN15194, what does it match or do they have to go down a different pathway to make it a motorbike? Is there the ability to say, 'It doesn't meet this standard; therefore, it has to be an unregistered vehicle'?

**Mr Bourke:** Obviously my knowledge is limited to the bicycle, so I will stick to that. Currently to bring an e-bike into Australia the voluntary advisory notice, and I emphasise the word 'voluntary', is exactly what we spoke about—maximum 250 watts of continuous rated power, 25 kilometres an hour maximum assisted speed and maximum throttle up to six kilometres an hour. After that, it cannot be legally imported as an e-bike. There is a process called that thing is not a road vehicle. That is the advisory notice that you apply for. There are other categories you can apply for but then, if it does not meet those, you must then meet the Australian Design Rules for a motorbike.

**Mr MELLISH:** I had a question about existing laws and regulations around PMDs. Does government need to do a better job or a more thorough job promoting what the existing regulations are? Are there any specific regulations and rules that you think the community needs to be more aware of? We have heard from other people before the committee particularly that teenagers do not know what the rules are in some regards or is it about more hire scheme awareness?

**Mr Bourke:** There are two elements to that. Obviously from PMDs, my focus is e-bikes. I just want to be clear that I will not be touching on the scooter element. One thing we are very clear on is that we see parental education as a priority. Children—I should not say 'children'—but people much younger than myself maybe not only do not know the rules but also are willing to flaunt the rules. We are conscious that a lot of parents are purchasing product without actually understanding what it is they are doing. From our perspective, there is a very clear need for a greater education campaign targeting them, whether it is through the education system, whether it is through transport. However we approach it, I believe it is the parents, as well as students or teenagers, who are controlling a lot of this.

You asked a question about a regulation, it was also highlighted in our submission that there are two definitions of an e-bike in the current regulations. The industry would support harmonising that to one and getting rid of the 200-watt legislation because, as far as we are aware, there is not a road legal product in that category. Not so much in Queensland but in other states where the throttle is still allowed, it is a further loophole that we believe should be cleaned up.

**Mr KEMPTON:** You may have addressed this. Electric mountain bikes assist riders to get up mountains quickly and to ride down. The argument has been used that we need to increase the power for people in the general use of e-bikes to get up and down hills. Is that accurate?

**Mr Bourke:** From the industry's perspective, we would support an increase in power of a specific category, not a sport bike and not a mountain bike. It would be a cargo bike and load-carrying bikes. Europe has a specific e-cargo bike standard. We would be very supportive of having a very clear delineation between a mountain bike, road bike, commuter bike, hybrid bike and a cargo bike or a load-carrying bike that is designed specifically for loads. Yes, there is a need for more power but in a very specific category.

**Mr KEMPTON:** Generally, in relation to e-bikes for personal use that are not cargo bikes, the power is sufficient.

**Mr Bourke:** With a good quality motor, yes. That is probably the key issue here. There are some that I would not consider high quality that maybe are looking for more power.

**CHAIR:** We heard from a witness in Townsville who talked about this exact issue. He said he would be fearful of increasing the power too much because the brakes will not actually work coming down or is that a different aspect? Have you turned your mind to that at all?

**Mr Bourke:** In terms of mountain bikes specifically—

**CHAIR:** In terms of cargo bikes.

**Mr Bourke:** In terms of cargo bikes, in Europe they have a use specific standard. This is something that is happening very clearly in Europe and we are, like with most things including e-bikes, five to 10 years behind. They have a very clear electrical standard, but then they also have a very clear mechanical standard which would include the shearing forces on the frame, the brakes and the forks. The actual bike itself is a higher quality.

I would like to extend slightly on the member for Cook's question. We would also look at a medical exemption for people with a disability. It is something that I have not touched on. It is something we would hate to see as collateral damage—people who have a specific need for a specific product. I believe that a medical exemption—and we have many examples, whether it is someone with cerebral palsy or an Army veteran who has lost part of a leg or whatever the scenario may be—would be very valuable.

**CHAIR:** Peter, that is the first time that has been raised.

**Ms BUSH:** You have piqued my interest on the cargo bikes. I have a lot of people using those in my electorate and they are experiencing exactly the issue that you have mentioned. Could you expand on what you are seeing in terms of cargo bike use? Not everyone can afford a chopper or even a bike sometimes. What is the role of cargo bikes, do you think, moving forward?

**Mr Bourke:** There are two key elements of cargo bikes from my perspective. One is for the family, whether it is replacing the second car or moving people. I mentioned earlier the NRMA figure of \$22,000 is what the average car costs to run. That is in a single year so, yes, it is expensive. A good cargo bike does not cost that amount of money. We have some fantastic services out there that will lease a bike on a week, a month or a yearly basis, so you do not have that up-front fee, but it does allow you access to that bike. We have that part of the market, which is moving little Johnny or little Jill to school or to shops.

Then you have the second part which is the 'last mile freight'—so the couriers. We are very conscious that in the City of London they identified that, on average, a white van could do six deliveries an hour, I think it was; a cargo bike could do 10. They have a far higher efficiency because of parking and movement through space. Around built-up areas, last mile freight is far more efficient in terms of time, as well as environmental and space requirements. They do not take up the space of a car to park. You have two very clear markets in that. Around the world that is an exploding—that is really bad pun—that is a very fast growing section of the market. Certainly last mile freight in major cities such as London is expanding dramatically.

**CHAIR:** Peter, thank you very much. We have gone over time with that session, but it was very informative. In terms of AS15194 that your committee, with your other hat on, is working on, once you resolve that, what is the timeframe to implement that?

**Mr Bourke:** Obviously I cannot talk to that because it would have to go through a regulatory impact approach. The expectation is that by, say, Christmas it would go through a public comment phase. As long as there is no significant push back—which is obviously the question—around Christmas and early in the New Year. Of course, we have to go through a bureaucratic process and Christmas holidays.

**CHAIR:** Now I understand. It is a bit more complicated. We look forward to having that conversation. Thank you, Peter, for your appearance here today. The time has well and truly expired. There were no questions taken on notice.



**POWER, Ms Stephanie, Policy and Research Officer, Council on the Ageing Queensland**

**YOUNG, Mr Darren, Chief Executive Officer, Council on the Ageing Queensland**

**CHAIR:** I welcome representatives from the Council on the Ageing. You may make a brief opening statement after which the committee will have questions for you.

**Mr Young:** Good morning everyone. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the committee today. We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we work and meet here today, the Turrbal and Yagara people, and pay our respects to elders past and present.

Council on the Ageing is the state's peak body representing older Queenslanders. We are also the seniors' socialisation isolation prevention peak. For over 60 years we have worked to represent the needs, rights and aspirations of older people. We continue to advocate for an age-inclusive and age-friendly Queensland where all ages can access spaces and places for essential services and supports to stay connected to their community. We welcome this inquiry as an opportunity to speak directly to a growing concern which has been voiced during our community engagement in recent years.

The safety, regulation and equity implications of electric personal mobility devices, PMDs, can impact older Queenslanders' ability to navigate their local neighbourhoods and wider communities safely and with confidence. Community insights necessitated further investigation. We saw the inquiry as an opportunity to conduct an online survey of how older Queenslanders navigate their local communities in shared spaces and their experiences and perceptions of safety in relation to PMD use. The collective insights revealed the benefits of PMDs—for example, affordability, convenience and providing an environmentally sustainable option for transport. These devices can enable mobility where other transport options are limited or prohibited due to cost. However, a strong majority raised serious concerns, especially where the rapid uptake of these devices has outpaced infrastructure, education and enforcement.

Three primary themes emerged. The firstly was safety in shared environments. Older people reported near misses and collisions involving PMDs on footpaths, in shopping precincts, parks, beachfronts and near public transport hubs. Quiet, fast moving devices, particularly those without lights, helmets or alert systems, are causing increasing anxiety which can lead to social withdrawal and adapting routines to avoid traffic, certain locations or streets and busier routes.

The second theme relates the vulnerability of specific populations. Older people living with changing capacities or disabilities using mobility aids and children are often disproportionately affected. Community members stressed that shared infrastructure such as pathways, parks and beachfronts are not designed to be maintained in a way that supports the safe coexistence of an existing community space.

The third theme was understanding of the regulations. Survey respondents described widespread confusion about PMD rules, poor signage and inconsistent enforcement. There was a strong perception that riders operate outside of existing regulatory frameworks and do not show accountability, which diminishes public confidence in the use of shared public and community spaces.

Our submission outlines six key recommendations we believe must be addressed to improve safety, equity and community trust in the use of PMDs. We support the further development of a statewide standard of PMD use to include licensing, registration and third-party insurance comparable to other motorised transport. We think there is a pressing need for physically separated or dedicated lanes for PMDs, pedestrians and cyclists. Where separation is not possible, signage, lighting and maintenance must prioritise safety for older people, including people with changing capacities and living with disability.

We recommend: mandatory training for new riders and PMD users; public awareness campaigns for pedestrians, riders and drivers; and the integration of PMD safety and community education. PMD use must be subject to clear penalties, speed limits in high-traffic zones and shared responsibility from hire companies, including device tracking and reporting misuse. The introduction of device traceability and enforcement of insurance coverage is critical for recovery from injuries and accidents and to build public confidence in the use of PMDs. Lastly, improved data sharing between councils, health services and law enforcement will allow for evidence-based planning and tailored interventions according to the relevant infrastructure within each region across Queensland.

Personal mobility devices are now an enduring part of Queensland's transport landscape; however, if we want them to become an enabler of age-friendly communities we must ensure their use is guided by principles of safety, accessibility and accountability. Older Queenslanders have told

us they want infrastructure and systems that keep them safe. They want to remain active, connected and to have a say in how public spaces are shared and governed. We thank the committee for its work in advancing this important conversation. Both Steph and I are happy to take any questions.

**CHAIR:** Thank you for your submission; that was very comprehensive.

**Mr MELLISH:** Thank you for your very detailed submission to the inquiry. One of your recommendations called on a collection of usage and incident data and collaboration between local and state governments. We were unable to ask Brisbane City Council today. How would you like to see levels of government work better together to prioritise that data collection?

**Mr Young:** I think Steph might be better placed to answer this question. My first reaction to that is just simply having more openness in terms of the data. Making that more publicly available would also be important as well as ensuring there is some agreed consensus about what sort of data is to be used across different regions so we can collaborate and have better planning.

**Ms Power:** We also acknowledge there can be great differences between communities, particularly regional and rural communities and high-density urban communities, so obviously the same criteria would not apply across all communities. We do believe there could be core criteria pulled together. It could be as simple as a template, for example, that could be completed semi regularly by local councils and embedded in their regular data collection. Possibly there could be a community survey every now and again just to take the pulse on how people are feeling, whether they are still feeling safe in their local communities. Sometimes just asking a simple question, 'Do you feel safe on your local footpath?' can start a broader conversation on the issues that people are encountering on a day-to-day basis.

**Mr KEMPTON:** Last week I saw an elderly couple on what almost looked like an electric chair. It did not have any safety devices and they were moving only at walking speed. Then you get people in electric chairs—excuse the pun—right up to full mobility bikes. Is there any risk of aged people being caught up in some kind of definition of what is an e-scooter and e-bike who are currently using otherwise quite normal machines to travel around?

**Ms Power:** I do believe from our recent survey there is some confusion regarding personal mobility devices and definitions, hence I went on at length in our submission to define that. I do believe there is an education piece for older adult cohorts who are using shared spaces around the difference between a personal mobility device versus a mobility aid, for example. I do believe that a lot of people responded to our survey. I was quite frankly surprised at how many respondents we had to our survey: 166. I would like to add that the majority of those respondents were not PMD users, because that is an important point, but they still had a very strong opinion on PMDs. We broke that definition down in our survey as well to make it very clear to people what we were asking of them and the difference between a mobility aid and a PMD. I do think there needs to be a broader community conversation on the difference and the difference in expectations around road safety and usage.

Some people used the survey to also have a say on their concerns around mobility aid safety and drivers on mobility aids. It was not just them airing concerns about PMD drivers or riders; it was also around people using mobility aids. That was a smaller percentage of respondents, but it was also raised as an issue. I think it is a broader conversation about anything that is motorised that can travel at a higher speed. What are the expectations around right of way, for example? What are the road rules on a footpath or thoroughfare and how does that differ to being out on a street? Is it safe for someone on a mobility aid to be driving on the side of the road on a freeway, for example? We have heard incredible stories over the last three years from people who have not had adequate infrastructure to ride on a mobility aid and they travelled down a freeway, for example. That is an extreme case, but we have heard instances of that happening. We always go back to the broader picture. If it is age friendly, it means it is age inclusive and all abilities inclusive as well. I am sorry, I gave a far longer answer.

**Mr KEMPTON:** There may be a need for exemptions rather than just definitions?

**Ms Power:** Yes, I believe so. It needs to go beyond definitions. I think it is part of a wider community education piece for all age cohorts, hence our suggestion from school-aged communities through to older adults. What we are proposing is quite broad.

**Mr KEMPTON:** I think that is important for us.

**Ms BUSH:** Thanks for coming in today and for your submission. It strikes me that by 2050 one in five Queenslanders is going to be 65 years or older. I think that is 22 per cent compared to about 16 per cent now, so we are clearly an ageing demographic. I do get concerned about the visibility of older people in our policy planning. Where are the opportunities for us as a committee to make sure

we include older folk in the work we are doing? I have Queensland Walks in the back of my mind, which said they are watching people—pedestrians—stop walking because of feeling conflicted on paths. Where are the big opportunities for us as a committee?

**Mr Young:** We heard really strongly from older people, not only in the last couple of years but also through the survey, that they were withdrawing from their usual routes, whether it was going down to the local shops or elsewhere. They were concerned that if they did get hit by an e-mobility device that there is no way to track that person down and there may be no recompense for that as well. Hence why we put in there we think there is a need for the further exploration of licensing and registration of those devices to re-instil confidence for older people that if there was an incident or accident they are able to pursue those individuals who may be involved whereas at the moment they feel like they would just get off scot-free. They are able to injure them and there is nothing following it. We think that is probably one of the priority areas that we would argue could make a difference to get greater visibility over those who are using devices and to be able to track those devices.

**Ms Power:** I also think there are solutions that can be implemented right now at a lower cost; that is, signage. That popped up an awful lot in our survey of respondents as well. Sometimes something as simple as a sign can provide reassurance to that local community that council and people have thought through, 'This is a shared community space.' Darren and I were talking before coming in. An example I have often used when talking to people about road safety issues is the triangle giving right of way—a visual which shows a triangle with an arrow going to the user of that shared space. I gave Darren the example of what I have seen out at Samford on the rail trail. There is a horse, there is a pedestrian and there is a bike. I have seen other variations, for example, with motorbikes, a pedestrian and usually an animal in more regional and rural communities. In high-density urban areas that could be replaced by an e-scooter, a bicycle and a pedestrian to clearly show who has right of way. We forget sometimes that a simpler solution can provide a lot of reassurance to older cohorts.

We need to be thinking about the future, as well. We are all aging and we are all living longer. Longer term we have to think about how we are designing the built environment and public spaces for age-friendly use because changing capacities is not going to go away and we have to lean into this and think of longer term solutions—how we can continue to spare these spaces.

**CHAIR:** It is a point well made.

**Mr JAMES:** You are probably one of the first organisations to support licensing and registration which is a good idea. Do you have any thoughts on fees and costs for this?

**Mr Young:** We have not gone as far as fees; it is probably more in principle. We certainly consistently heard very strongly from people that having the need to register those devices and to have some way of tracking and maybe connecting the use to your driver's licence, for instance, would be effective and restore confidence in the community, but we have not gone down the path of costs.

**Mr KING:** One thing I want to talk about is the delivery of dedicated e-mobility infrastructure. Along the line of safety: with the different modes of e-scooters and e-everything now on the same path whether helmets—they never have been mandated and I would not want to push that button—have been considered for safety, as well as safe zones just for e-mobility?

**Mr Young:** I will start and maybe Steph can add. I think the stronger thing we were hearing was making sure that in the physical space, particularly in the busy commuter zones, there are really clear areas where you can use an electronic device. Certainly we have lots of examples of where that has become muddled up and people do not know who to give way to. I think better delineation of that—it would not be everywhere—maybe in the hotspots would be right. I am not sure about helmets, though.

**Ms Power:** It was clear in the survey that people felt very strongly about the use of helmets—older adults showing concern for the safety of younger generations, for example. It is not just their own safety they are concerned about; they are actually concerned about people they do not know who they see riding on the footpath, tailgating cars in the most extreme example or riding up alongside. We heard from one gentleman who was driving his car and I believe he had two teenagers trying to attach themselves to the back of his car while he was driving. You can imagine the high anxiety that caused. While that was happening he was also thinking through the safety considerations of the riders—not just himself. That is a generational difference obviously that comes with maturity, experience on the road and navigation, but I think helmets would also bring reassurance to the community as well as seeing younger generations with helmets.

**Mr KING:** The studies that you have done have obviously informed your submissions. Have they been presented to the minister or made public?

**Ms Power:** No. This community survey was specifically designed for this inquiry and so this is the first time we have presented these findings. They are only in the submission.

**Mr KING:** So they informed the submission.

**Ms Power:** Yes, exactly.

**CHAIR:** Thank you very much. As I said, I appreciate your submission. I think human behaviour and bad actors on these devices versus people who are doing the right thing is clearly accepted. How can we best inform your community, through education or whatever the research has shown, to give them that sense of safety because perception is reality?

**Ms Power:** That is a big one for me. As the person who analysed the data from the survey, perception was huge. I would argue in some cases, the perception of safety is more important in some instances than what is happening in the moment because the perception of safety can sometimes make or break someone's ability to get out the door in the first place and get to the shops. If someone has had a bad experience two weeks before, that adds to their heightened anxiety around thinking about what the traffic is going to be like when they step outside the door. If it has been a familiar path to them for some time and that changes quite quickly, say, in the space of three to six months, and there are more devices on that footpath, that can induce anxiety for that community member. If they do not have alternative routes to take, that can then escalate and become a great concern for them. That is where we are seeing cases of social withdrawal and people being reluctant to leave the house more often, particularly if they do not have other forms of transport and they are still walking or taking a bus for example.

**CHAIR:** I am not sure if you have provided us with the full suite of information from your research, but is there anything else you would like to provide us with in that regard?

**Ms Power:** I am happy to provide the committee with more of a full dataset and quotations of firsthand accounts from people of how they are feeling.

**CHAIR:** If you could do that by Monday, 8 September that would be wonderful. We will consider that taken on notice. The time for this session has now expired. Thank you Darren and Stephanie for the information you have provided and for your advocacy of aging and experienced people in the community.

**MAGUIRE, Mr Bruce, Lead Policy Advisor, Corporate Affairs and Advocacy, Vision Australia (via videoconference)**

**McMORROW, Ms Caitlin, NDIS and Aged Care Specialist Lead, Corporate Affairs and Advocacy, Vision Australia (via videoconference)**

**MOSS, Ms Michelle, Chief Executive Officer, Queenslanders with Disability Network**

**CHAIR:** Michelle, I invite you to make an opening statement after which the committee will have some questions.

**Ms Moss:** I would like to start by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we are meeting and pay my respects to elders past, present and emerging. Queenslanders with Disability Network is the executive peak organisation for Queenslanders with disability. It provides a leadership and coordination function across 17 government funded disability peak and representative organisations around the state. QDN is a member-led organisation with over 3,000 members and supporters. We represent people with diverse disability.

QDN began this work probably in late 2020 and 2021 as members were starting to raise issues around the impacts of e-scooters, particularly on themselves and safety. I guess over the last five years the policy and legislative frameworks around that have shifted. In putting together the submission for this inquiry, we engaged with members with a broad range of disabilities and certainly received feedback from people about the benefits of e-mobility devices around them being a cost-effective transport solution for some people with disability. They talked about how that enabled greater independence, access to essential services and gave people the ability to participate in social and economic activities. People said, 'It has given me a little bit of freedom, I would be absolutely lost without it.' However, on the flip side of that is the ongoing experiences of many of our members and people with disability who experience challenges because of e-mobility devices, particularly around dangerous e-scooter behaviour which poses a risk of safety for people with vision impairment and blindness and people who have their own mobility challenges who maybe use wheelchairs themselves or need assistance in moving around. That was consistent in the feedback.

Whilst there have obviously been some shifts in the regulatory environment that has been put in place—after the original awareness campaign about those new rules we saw some change in the behaviour; people were a little bit more aware of where they left their scooter so it was not across the pathway and blocking someone who uses a wheelchair meaning they have to go out on the road—there is consistent feedback that is back to being a real challenge and an escalating problem for people.

Our submission to the inquiry put forward a number of recommendations and key things that we think it is important to focus on. There are a couple I want to draw attention to. One is improved accessibility in infrastructure. I know previous witnesses were also talking about that but it really is about having a space for people that is safe. Strengthening the regulation enforcement is important, particularly in that space of noncompliant imported devices. We received strong feedback from members about the importance of education, public awareness hotspots—targeting young people in that is critical—and the data collection and reporting. A centralised instant reporting system would be really important, particularly in having that systems-level lens of understanding and monitoring the experiences and the situation.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, Ms Moss. Would you like to make an opening statement, Mr Maguire?

**Mr Maguire:** Yes, I would. Thank you for the opportunity to give evidence before the committee today. I have had the privilege of appearing before quite a few parliamentary committees now and I always appreciate the opportunity to present the views and concerns and perspectives of people who are blind or who have low vision. The introduction of e-scooters and other e-mobility devices over the past few years has caused extreme fear and anxiety in the community that I represent, so Queenslanders who are blind or who have low vision are looking to this inquiry with a mixture of hope and trepidation—hope that it will pave the way for Queensland footpaths to once again become safe for pedestrians to walk on but trepidation that it will fail to acknowledge and address the negative impact that e-mobility devices are causing for people who are blind or who have low vision.

Vision Australia is the largest provider of services to people who are blind or have low vision across Australia. Each year we support more than 26,000 clients through a wide range of services including library and information, occupational therapy, orientation and mobility, and seeing eye dogs. The final report of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability challenges us to embrace the root and branch change that is needed for Australia to

become a society that is truly inclusive of people with disability. The commissioners noted that one characteristic of a truly inclusive society is that people with disability should be able to live with dignity and respect and be allowed to take risks. When the commissioners referred to taking risks, they meant that people with disability should be able to do things like starting a new career or starting a small business or getting a mortgage—all things that have an element of risk associated with them—but what the commissioners do not mean is that if you are a person with a disability you should have to take a risk every time you step outside your front door to walk down to the shops or go to work or catch a bus, and that is exactly the kind of risk that many Queenslanders who are blind or who have low vision began to face when e-mobility devices were introduced without any consideration for how they would drastically compromise the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable pedestrians.

Our submission to the inquiry includes a number of anecdotes and comments highlighting the experiences of people who are blind or who have low vision. These were captured by a survey that we conducted in 2021. Here is one comment—

I do not choose to go to Brisbane now as I feel I would not be safe in the city or visiting museums or the art gallery or just enjoying the environment, Southbank ... riverside etc

Here is a comment from someone who had a collision with an e-scooter and its uncaring rider—

E-scooter came around a corner and collided with me. I fell, my [Seeing Eye] dog yelped because I yanked the lead accidentally as I fell and the scooter rider just rode off. I was not badly injured, but nobody checked. I limped about 2 km home and felt very upset. Nothing police or council are prepared to do about it

We believe strongly that if e-mobility devices continue to be allowed on regular pedestrian footpaths then the 62 per cent of respondents to our survey who said that they had been involved in a collision or near miss with an e-scooter will only increase and the 90 per cent who said that they now feel less safe when they walk outside their houses will only increase. We emphasise in our submission that we support innovative transport solutions—and we have included a number of recommendations that build on innovation—but we are very clear that the blithe e-mobility of some must not be achieved at the fearful immobility of others. If I may, Chair, I will now hand over briefly to my colleague Caitlin McMorro. Caitlin is Vision Australia's NDIS and aged-care funding specialist lead. She is also a Brisbane resident and will share a couple of personal experiences with e-mobility devices. Thanks, Caitlin.

**CHAIR:** Thanks, Bruce, and over to you, Caitlin.

**Ms McMorro:** Thank you, Chair. I would like to begin by reiterating Bruce's comments that the usage of e-mobility devices, particularly in busy pedestrian areas, has had significant impacts for the safety and wellbeing of people who are blind or have low vision. I myself am totally blind and I work with a guide dog as my mobility aid. My dog is very skilled at her job and as a team we have to adapt constantly to changes in our working environment, whether that is caused by building and construction, unexpected traffic or obstacles on footpaths. Even with our substantial skills as a working team though, I have found that safe navigation has become increasingly difficult with the proliferation of e-mobility devices in recent years. I am no longer confident that I will be able to walk safely in busy pedestrian areas such as the Brisbane CBD.

One of the key challenges I find as a blind person is that vehicles such as e-scooters are generally quite a fast-moving obstacle and that makes it difficult for my dog and I to negotiate them effectively on footpaths and anticipate what the rider might do. More often than not, these devices are also silent, meaning that I have little, if any, prior warning of their approach. I cannot stress enough how much that increases my cognitive load as a vision-impaired pedestrian. Not only do I have to be alert to all the usual obstacles that I would expect to encounter on footpaths such as other pedestrians, street furniture, cars backing out of driveways; I also have to contend with fast-moving and largely silent vehicles that could significantly injure me if the rider does not stop in time or is not aware that I am less able to move out of their path than a sighted person would be. The anxiety of that is now something that pervades my daily travels around Brisbane.

Just this weekend while attending an event in South Bank, for example, I found myself caught on a footpath between two e-scooters travelling in opposite directions at quite high speed. I was not aware of them until they were a couple of metres away from me, and neither rider stopped or slowed or warned me of their approach. I had no time to make a decision, so I could do nothing except hope that they would navigate around me. Although I have talked primarily about the challenges that e-mobility devices present us with as moving obstacles, they can equally present additional dangers even when they are stationary, as Michelle mentioned in her opening statement. I have had a number of experiences where devices such as e-scooters have been left abandoned and blocking a footpath

and so often that means that my dog and I have to step off the kerb into busy oncoming traffic in order to navigate around them. These are just a couple of examples of the daily challenges we now encounter in Brisbane as pedestrians who are blind or have low vision.

As a blind person I want to be part of the community. I cannot drive, so I walk almost everywhere—to get to work and participate in social events. I should be able to do that knowing that the footpaths and pedestrian spaces that I rely upon for access are safe, but that is sadly not the current reality in which I find myself. Instead, I step out of my front door feeling anxious and uncertain and wondering if I will be injured through no fault of my own. I want to impress upon the committee that this is a completely untenable position for people who are blind or have low vision and I hope my perspective will help you to understand why a change in the use of e-mobility devices is very much needed. I just want to close by thanking you for the opportunity to take part in today's hearing and I wish you all well in your ongoing deliberations about this important issue.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, Caitlin. We appreciate your good wishes. What is the name of your dog?

**Ms McMorrow:** Esther.

**CHAIR:** Esther and you must do a wonderful job. I can only imagine the trepidation, using your word, that you feel with some of these things, so thank you very much for your evidence.

**Mr MELLISH:** Thank you to both of your organisations for appearing and for your submissions into this inquiry. Both organisations have spoken about an escalating problem in terms of both the parking and the use of these vehicles, particularly in Brisbane. Is there anything that council can do to better regulate where these vehicles can be parked and which footpaths they can be used on? That is probably to you first, Ms Moss, and then over to Vision Australia.

**Ms Moss:** I know that this has been an ongoing discussion. We have been on many different committees with the city council and councils around this issue of parking. Certainly the dedicated spaces and geofencing are an important part, but part of it is also ensuring—and Caitlin and Bruce will probably talk about this as well—that for people who are vision impaired there needs to be tactile warnings about where that parking is. I think there does need to be enforcement and with that education. There are not enough spaces and places and people do continue to park and leave devices in all sorts of places. I walked up here today and saw numerous examples of scooters just left not in designated areas, so I think there needs to be more areas. There certainly needs to be more enforcement of that and there needs to be education about why it is important. It is not just about rules for rule's sake; it is about things that make a difference for people's safety that is the critical point.

**CHAIR:** Thanks, Michelle. Bruce or Caitlin, did you have anything to add?

**Mr Maguire:** Yes. Our basic view is that e-scooters should not be allowed on regular pedestrian footpaths. We do acknowledge the value that e-mobility devices can have for people with disability. However, as Michelle mentioned in her opening statement, we do have an exception that includes people with disability to use these devices, but apart from that we do not believe that there is any place for e-mobility devices to be on regular pedestrian footpaths. We think they should only be on shared-use paths. We also think that any scooter that is used in a public place should be equipped with technology that allows the e-scooter to be parked remotely. A number of companies have this technology now, so if an e-scooter is parked in an inappropriate place it can be moved remotely. Again, there must be designated—and adequately designated—parking areas for e-scooters. I was talking to a client of ours who was in a Brisbane suburb a couple of weeks ago. They also, like Caitlin, have a seeing eye dog and they found that they could not move—that they were walking along the footpath and they just came to so many e-scooters all parked together the dog just stopped. It had no idea what to do and the person was just stuck there not knowing where to go, so we do think that there has to be more parking spaces—more clearly designated parking spaces—technology that allows e-scooters to be moved remotely and of course greater public awareness.

**Mr MELLISH:** Thank you for that.

**Mr KEMPTON:** I just want to dig into this a little bit further, because it is important for people with a disability who rely upon e-mobility devices to get around that we do not curtail that by restricting others. It is also a big trade-off between the freedom of the people who use these and the loss of freedom to people who have a disability. With geofencing and the ability of these machines to be returned back to a port of call, there is also emerging technology around detection that we observed last week in Townsville where a bike or any other mobility device can detect people in front and slow down or stop. It gets a little bit tricky and you would not want to be branding people, but it might be

possible for people who have especially sight disability to have some kind of a warning device when these things are near that gives them a beep in their phones or something, because it is a massive issue and trying to make safe places for everybody against everyone's freedom to use them is an issue that we face every day. I am just wondering if you had any comment about that.

**Ms Moss:** Certainly our members have talked about how it would be helpful, particularly for people with vision impairment, to have some signal that allows people to know that those devices are coming close, particularly as well for people who use wheelchairs and their own mobility devices. It is certainly a complex situation for all members of the community. I know that there were some questions around motorised wheelchairs and motorised scooters, which certainly sit in a separate piece of legislation than what we are talking about here, but it is other people with disability who need to use e-mobility devices to get around, people who might have chronic fatigue so that it is not necessarily possible to get from the train station to their home. This provides a really low-cost, effective mechanism for people. So, yes, that balance is critical.

**Mr KEMPTON:** I think it is not only the warning but also making the device slow down or stop when approaching especially a person with vision impairment.

**CHAIR:** Bruce or Caitlin, did you have anything to add?

**Mr Maguire:** We know that there is technology that a number of companies have developed that can be fitted to the e-devices, e-scooters and so forth that allows the device to detect when there is a pedestrian in the vicinity and that can automatically slow down the device. The big problem, as Caitlin mentioned, for people who are blind or have low vision is that we cannot hear these things. Having an acoustic vehicle alerting system on an e-scooter in the same way that we are going to be introducing those on to electric vehicles in November this year as part of the Australian Standards would certainly go a long way. I think one of the challenges of putting the onus on the individual who is blind or has low vision to avoid these devices is that it depends on so many factors beyond their control. If you had some kind of signalling app on your phone then what happens if you do not have the phone, what happens if it does not work, what happens if the battery is flat? I think that, whilst we are certainly not opposed to further discussions around some of these things, the primary responsibility has to be at the device end.

**Ms McMorrow:** I would very much agree with that. I think, as someone who is blind or has low vision, when I am navigating in an environment I am already paying attention to a bunch of different things. I am being mindful of vehicle traffic, I am being mindful of pedestrian traffic, I am paying attention to my dog's body language because I need to do that for her to effectively guide me around things. An additional notification on my phone to let me know that there is an e-scooter present is realistically probably not something I would look at. I have already got enough distractions in the environment. I would agree with what Bruce has said in terms of I think it is important that we are not putting the onus on people who are blind or have low vision to manage that interaction. I think it does have to happen at the device end.

**CHAIR:** Well said.

**Ms BUSH:** Thank you, Michelle, Bruce and Caitlin, for your wonderful advocacy. It really breaks my heart, to be honest, to hear you saying that people are withdrawing from Brisbane, not wanting to visit our city, spend their money here, walk around and enjoy everything that Brisbane has to offer, because of some of these restrictions. Brisbane City Council is the largest council in the country. It has the largest fleet of sharable scooters and it has incredible purchasing power. Have you been consulted at all prior to them issuing tenders for providers to provide these scooters on what the agreement or what the conditions of those tenders could have been to have made the lives of people with disability or with vision impairments easier?

**Ms Moss:** I think that certainly procurement processes for whatever activity it is holds a great opportunity to be able to have some conditions in there that talk about disability inclusion. It is certainly something that QDN has been doing some work around, particularly for the Brisbane 2032 Games, and how can procurement processes enable organisations to have greater disability inclusion and awareness and also how whatever is being implemented could affect that and what measures might be put in place to mitigate some of those. We sit on a number of committees, as I said, and certainly engage with various councils that are looking at how they can better address the safety and impacts of e-scooters for people with disability, but I have not had any direct engagement around that procurement process so I cannot make any comment on that.

**CHAIR:** Bruce and Caitlin, did you have a comment on that?



**Mr Maguire:** I certainly have not been personally involved with any consultation, but Vision Australia is on a number of committees, both state and local government, so I am happy to take that one on notice, if it would be helpful to the committee, and provide a definitive answer.

**CHAIR:** Thank you, Bruce, that would be great.

**Mr JAMES:** Michelle, in your submission you suggested that there should be dedicated e-mobility lanes. Is that in addition to the existing pushbike lanes or are you talking separate again?

**Ms Moss:** I think you could certainly look at how that is incorporated into the broader infrastructure. I think, to Bruce and Caitlin's points, footpaths are an important place for pedestrians and for people making their way around so I think it would be something that would certainly need to be considered and what the options are. But shared spaces, I think.

**Mr JAMES:** One of the submissions we received talked about in a built-up area—for example, in the CBD—that we might slow the cars down, speed the e-mobility devices up a bit and come to a figure of 30 kilometres an hour and share the roads in the built-up areas. What do you think of that? That would get them off the footpath.

**Ms Moss:** I probably would not have enough knowledge and experience about the road safety implications to make those sorts of recommendations. I know when we were part of discussions around the speed limits and setting limits to the speed there was a lot of discussion around what was safe for people going past them and what was safe for riders to maintain a speed on, but I certainly do not think I have the right technical expertise to make comment on that particular point.

**CHAIR:** What was that safe speed or consideration?

**Ms Moss:** I think it was 12 kilometres. That is what was legislated at the time.

**CHAIR:** Bruce and Caitlin, did you have anything to add to the member for Mulgrave's question?

**Mr Maguire:** Certainly we want everybody to be safe. We want e-scooter riders to be safe too. We know that there are significant safety issues if e-scooters are on the road so obviously if there is going to be a road share type of arrangement then there would have to be very careful consideration as to how that would be implemented. Essentially, we think there should be separate infrastructure for e-scooters and other similar devices so that they do not have to share the road with cars and they do not have to share footpaths with pedestrians.

**CHAIR:** Obviously we are talking about user behaviour or, in many cases, bad behaviour. Is there any consideration apart from speed that you might have given thought to? If we cannot take these things off the footpath what sort of things should we require the riders of these to do?

**Mr Maguire:** Our view is firstly they should not be on the footpaths. We come back to two things. Firstly, the technology. There should be speed-limiting devices on all these scooters so that riders cannot go faster, and tamper proof devices. There does need to be an enhanced public awareness campaign. We know that there are certain groups of riders who pay little regard to speed limits and public safety. That sort of awareness needs to be accompanied by stringent enforcement. The comment that I read out earlier, and which was echoed by other comments in our survey, is that people feel the police are just not enforcing regulations and not making sure that e-scooter riders obey speed limits. We think that there has to be a much greater focus on enforcement as well as awareness.

**CHAIR:** Did you have anything to add to that, Caitlin?

**Ms McMorrow:** No, nothing further from me, but I do think enforcement is one of the key aspects of this. People will not do something unless there is either an incentive for doing it or a penalty for not doing it. I think that certainly factors into the change that we need to see.

**CHAIR:** Michelle, did you want to add anything?

**Ms Moss:** I would echo that. I think enforcement is critical. Certainly our community has talked about how they want to see policing of people who are blatantly flouting the laws. I think on the flip side of that that there are people who do not have the understanding of why and what is important. We have had a number of people have conversations with us after they have heard from a person with disability about why this is such an important issue and what impact it has. Caitlin has talked to us today about her experiences. I think critical to any public awareness campaign is for people to understand directly from the people with disability about why this is such a critical issue. That helps inform people's decision-making and potentially change their behaviour and be more aware when they are going to throw that scooter over just anywhere on the footpath versus thinking about what impact that has on someone with disability at the end of the day.

**CHAIR:** Thank you very much. The time for this session has concluded. Michelle, Caitlin and Bruce, thank you very much for your evidence today. I can assure you we understand these devices have a place in the system; we just want to make sure it is safe for everybody. Your evidence has been very high quality. Thank you. Bruce, there was a question on notice for Vision Australia regarding consultation engagements. If you could get the answer back to us by Monday, 8 September that would be great. I hope you enjoy the rest of your day. That concludes this hearing. Thank you to everyone who has participated today. Thank you to our Hansard reporters, our secretariat staff and the broadcast staff for their assistance. A transcript of today's hearing will be available on the committee's webpage in due course. I declare this public hearing closed.

**The committee adjourned at 12.28 pm.**